



# 1

## Sects, Parties, and Tendencies

Judaism of the last two centuries B.C.E. and the first century C.E. saw the development of a rich, variegated array of groups, sects, and parties. In this chapter we shall present certain of these groupings, both as they saw themselves and as others saw them. Samaritans, Hasideans, Pharisees and Sadducees, Essenes, and Therapeutae will come to our attention, as will a brief consideration of the hellenization of Judaism and appearance of an apocalyptic form of Judaism. The diversity—which is not in name only, but also in belief and practice, order of life and customary conduct, and the cultural and intellectual forms in which it was expressed—raises several questions: How did this diversity originate? What were the predominating characteristics of Judaism of that age or, indeed, were there such? Was there a Judaism or were there many Judaisms? How do rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity emerge from it or them?

The question of origins takes us back into the unknown. The religious and social history of Judaism in the latter part of the Persian era and in the Ptolemaic age (the fourth and third centuries B.C.E.) is little documented. The Persian province of Judah was a temple state ruled by a high-priestly aristocracy. Although some of the later parts of the Bible were written then and others edited at that time, and despite some new information from the Dead Sea manuscripts, the age itself remains largely unknown.

Some scholars have tried to reconstruct the history of this period by working back from the conflict between Hellenism and Judaism that broke into open revolt in the early second century.<sup>1</sup> With the conquests of Alexander the Great in 334–323 B.C.E.—and indeed, somewhat earlier—the vital and powerful culture of the Greeks and the age-old cultures of the Near East entered upon a process of contact and conflict and generated varied forms of religious synthesis and self-definition. The Jews in the Diaspora (the dispersion of the Jews around the Mediterranean world and the Near East) were deeply involved in this process, which also left its stamp on Jewish culture and religion in the land of Israel at least as early as the fourth century.

In the third century, but especially in the early second century, parts of the Jewish population and their religion and culture were in serious danger of being completely assimilated to Hellenistic culture, values, and practices. This threat of losing their distinctively Jewish heritage created tensions and polarization within the Jewish community. In the 60s of the second century open conflict broke out in Judea between the Seleucid kings and their Hellenizing backers, on the one hand, and their opponents, led by the family of Judas Maccabeus, on the other. It is reasonable to assume that groups of the pious—who made common cause with the Maccabean guerrillas—had come into existence already in the third century.

They were not alone, however. From the early second century on we hear of a number of groups and sects, although we have no public opinion polls or census figures to evaluate the size of these groups and the interrelationships among them. Nonetheless, we do know that, despite conflict, rivalry, and occasional mutual persecution, Pharisees, Sadducees, and some others functioned in the temple of Jerusalem and sat together in the national council known as the *gerousia* or Sanhedrin. Josephus presents a picture of the growing dominance of the Pharisees during the last century B.C.E. and first century C.E., and his picture appears to be based on fact. Other groups were clearly sects, cut off from the larger community of Israel—not so much by doctrine as by differing interpretations of the Torah and the divergent practice and observance that stemmed from these interpretations. The community at Qumran—Essenes of a particular persuasion and practice—were one such sect. They rejected the legitimacy of the temple—the great common institution of all Jewry—and of its high priest. They observed a different calendar, with roots extending back into the third century, if not before. Well before the Essenes, probably by the third century at the latest, another sect arose, namely, the Samaritans, who also rejected the Jerusalem temple and priesthood.

Three forms of postbiblical Israelite religion survive today: rabbinic Judaism, the heir of Pharisaism, from which all modern forms of Judaism descend; Christianity, the child of an eschatologically oriented Judaism; and Samaritanism. How these particular forms survived and dominated is a story for elsewhere. Here we can try only to penetrate back to the time before this threefold dominance was exclusive, and to examine the better documented groups and sects of that early age.

## THE SAMARITANS

Early in the period of the second temple, some decades after the return from the Babylonian Exile, conflict erupted between the returning Judeans and the inhabitants of Samaria, the area north of Judea. Samaria had historically been part of David's kingdom, but it had become the separate kingdom of Israel after Solomon's death in the tenth century B.C.E. The Judeans had their center in Jerusalem, where their temple was; the Samaritans' temple was located on Mount Gerizim, by the city of Shechem. Both groups claimed to be the true

people of Israel, each accusing the other of being apostate and a falsifier of Scripture. Scripture for the Samaritans meant only the Five Books of Moses; for the Jews (as the Judeans were later called) it was the broader body of writing that was developing into the Bible at this time. So the rift between Jews and Samaritans was ancient and deep; it touched on the basic issues of the temple and the scope and authority of Scripture.

It is impossible to tell just when the split between the Jews and the Samaritans became irreparable. Some place it as far back as the conflicts at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (the latter part of the fifth century B.C.E.). Others, stressing the documented ongoing contacts between the two communities, date it later and say that the conquest of Shechem by the Hasmonean monarch John Hyrcanus I (128 B.C.E.) precipitated the final split between the two groups. It is certain that by the latter part of the second century B.C.E. the two groups were quite separate, though even later rabbinic texts regard the Samaritans as (admittedly wayward) Israelites in a number of respects (see, for example, *m. Sanh.* 8:8).

The Samaritans differed from the Jews in many matters of faith and practice, but the two groups also had much in common. Samaria and Judea were both temple states whose chief authorities, down to the Roman period, were hereditary high priests. They shared the Torah as the most sacred Scripture, as well as a common history and language. Moreover, in the fourth and third centuries there were considerable contacts between the priestly aristocracies of Jerusalem and Shechem.

The Samaritans clung to a strict interpretation of the Pentateuch, which was the focus and most sacred object of their faith. Their life was centered around their temple, and priests played a predominant role in the community life. The direct line of the high priesthood was preserved continuously down to the seventeenth century, and even today the high priest (from another branch of the Aaronid family) is the head of the tiny surviving Samaritan community in Nablus (Shechem) and in Holon, near Tel-Aviv. The first text we present is drawn from an early-twentieth-century Samaritan chronicle compiled from ancient sources. It recounts the foundation of the Samaritan community as they understand it, and it depicts the Jews as schismatics. A second text, drawn from the biblical Book of Kings, gives a very different, Judahite version of the same event. The third text, drawn from the Jewish historian Josephus, recounts an event later in the life of the Samaritans.

### ***A Samaritan Story of the Formation of the Judahite (Jewish) Sect***

#### **The Samaritan Chronicle II, J–L**

**J** <sup>(15)</sup>When the high priest Uzzi<sup>a</sup> took up the high priesthood in succession to his fathers, there was a man named Eli the son of Jephunneh, of the descendants of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest, as overseer of the House of Ithamar.

K <sup>(A\*)</sup>This Eli sacrificed on the altar of stones, and under his control was the entire revenue of the Israelites' tithe which they offered to the Lord. <sup>(B\*)</sup>He was a prince over the whole tribe of Levi, under the command of the high priest Uzzi. <sup>(C\*)</sup>Now this Uzzi was but a youth, and Eli the son of Jephunneh was well advanced in age. <sup>(D\*)</sup>Eli yearned to take over the position of the high priest Uzzi. . . . And the people of Israel again did, at that time, what was evil in the sight of the Lord;<sup>b</sup> <sup>(G\*)</sup>and furthermore Eli the son of Jephunneh was possessed of evil designs, with the result that many of the Israelites turned from the way of truth.<sup>c</sup> <sup>(H\*)</sup>He seduced them, and they took after idols, formed marriage alliances with Gentiles, and even gave their daughters to them; <sup>(I\*)</sup>and they took the daughters of Gentiles as wives for themselves. . . .

L <sup>(A\*)</sup>Now Eli was ambitious, and he let it be known that he wanted to take over the position of high priest. . . . <sup>(E\*)</sup>Eli won over to himself many of the Israelites by saying to them, "Is it right that I should minister to a youth? <sup>(F\*)</sup>I do not want such a status for myself, and I expect you to share my opinion and follow me." <sup>(G\*)</sup>Eli went on to write to all the cities in the neighborhood of Mount Gerizim Bethel, and he addressed the above words to them. <sup>(H\*)</sup>These all gathered to his side and they addressed him as follows: "We accept what you have said; we will not disobey your orders. Everything you command us we will do." <sup>(I\*)</sup>They made a covenant with him accordingly. . . .

<sup>(O\*)</sup>At that particular time the Israelites who dwelt in the cities of Shechem, the cities of Philistia, and the cities of Jebus were divided in two. <sup>(P\*)</sup>One side followed the high priest Uzzi the son of Bahqi, and the other followed Eli the son of Jephunneh. <sup>(Q\*)</sup>The latter became evilminded, and they all followed their own inclinations. . . . <sup>(R\*)</sup>The Josephites followed the high priest Uzzi the son of Bahqi, and the Judahites followed Eli the son of Jephunneh. <sup>(U\*)</sup>The Ephraimites and Manassites drove out Eli and his community from the chosen place Mount Gerizim Bethel.

<sup>(V\*)</sup>Eli and his community, with their families and cattle, departed to sojourn in the territory of the tribe of Judah at Shiloh. <sup>(W\*)</sup>Eli dwelt there in that place, and he made himself an ark of gold based on the structure of the ark of the testimony. <sup>(X\*)</sup>He made himself also a mercy seat, cherubs, a table, a lampstand, and altars just like those of the sanctuary of Moses, which is to be found in the chosen place Mount Gerizim Bethel.

<sup>(Y\*)</sup>Eli wrote letters, sending them to the chiefs of the Israelites addressing them as follows: <sup>(Z\*)</sup>"Let whoever desires to see signs and wonders come to me at Shiloh, for the ark of the testimony containing the tablets is in my hands." <sup>(AA\*)</sup>He put into the ark the books of the law which were the version of Ithamar<sup>d</sup> the son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, peace be upon him. <sup>(BB\*)</sup>A good many Israelites gathered to him, and he built at Shiloh a tent based on the design of the tent of meeting.<sup>e</sup> <sup>(CC\*)</sup>This Eli did not change a single word of the holy law, but he revised the order of words. <sup>(DD\*)</sup>Eli went on sacrificing the offerings on the altars which he had made. <sup>(EE\*)</sup>Every one of his festivals was in accordance with the commandments of the holy law.<sup>f</sup>

a. According to Samaritan views, Uzzi was high priest in the true line of descent from Phineas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron. His role is predominant: "They have charge of the holy things, and they have the supremacy and the final decision. The king of Israel comes and goes at their command. . . . He is the one who is priest above every priest" (J:B\*-C\*, G\*).

b. = Judg 13:1.

c. Term often found in Samaritan sources.

d. A Samaritan reference to the Judahite version of the Torah.

e. Here the tabernacle at Shiloh is viewed as a false imitation of the true Tent of Meeting, which of course belonged to the Samaritans.

f. Compare with the opinion of the rabbinic sages that "every commandment which the Cutheans (i.e., the Samaritans) observed, they observed more punctiliously than Israel" (*b. Berakot* 47b).

This is the Samaritan view of the story. They preserved the true tradition, the true high priesthood, the true holy place, and admitted a kinship with the (to them) schismatic Judahites.

### ***The Judahites (Jews) on the Origins of the Samaritans***

#### **2 Kings 17**

1 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah began to reign in Samaria over Israel, and he reigned nine years. <sup>2</sup>And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, yet not as the kings of Israel who were before him. . . . <sup>6</sup>In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria<sup>a</sup> captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of Medes.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>7</sup>And this was so because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods <sup>8</sup>and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs which the kings of Israel had introduced. <sup>9</sup>And the people of Israel did secretly against the LORD their God things that were not right. They built for themselves high places at all their towns, from watchtower to fortified city; <sup>10</sup>they set up for themselves pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree; <sup>11</sup>and there they burned incense on all the high places, as the nations did whom the LORD carried away before them. And they did wicked things, provoking the LORD to anger, <sup>12</sup>and they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this." <sup>13</sup>Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the law which I commanded your fathers and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets." <sup>14</sup>But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God. <sup>15</sup>They despised his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and the warnings which he gave them. They went after false idols and became false, and they followed the nations that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do like them. <sup>16</sup>And they forsook all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made for themselves molten images of two calves; and they made an Asherah, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. <sup>17</sup>And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings,<sup>c</sup> and used divination and sorcery, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. <sup>18</sup>Therefore the LORD was very angry

with Israel, and removed them out of his sight; none was left but the tribe of Judah only.

<sup>19</sup>Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs which Israel had introduced. <sup>20</sup>And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel, and afflicted them, and gave them into the hand of spoilers until he had cast them out of his sight.

<sup>21</sup>When he had torn Israel from the house of David they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. And Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD and made them commit great sin. <sup>22</sup>The people of Israel walked in all the sins which Jeroboam did; they did not depart from them, <sup>23</sup>until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had spoken by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day.

<sup>24</sup>And the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the people of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria, and dwelt in its cities. <sup>25</sup>And at the beginning of their dwelling there, they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them. <sup>26</sup>So the king of Assyria was told, "The nations which you have carried away and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the god of the land; therefore he has sent lions among them, and behold, they are killing them, because they do not know the law of the god of the land." <sup>27</sup>Then the king of Assyria commanded, "Send there one of the priests whom you carried away thence; and let him<sup>d</sup> go and dwell there and teach them the law of the god of the land." <sup>28</sup>So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

<sup>29</sup>But every nation still made gods of its own, and put them in the shrines of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities in which they dwelt;<sup>e</sup> <sup>30</sup>the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, <sup>31</sup>and the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adramelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. <sup>32</sup>They also feared the LORD, and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. <sup>33</sup>So they feared the LORD but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away. <sup>34</sup>To this day they do according to the former manner.

They do not fear the LORD, and they do not follow the statutes or the ordinances or the law or the commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel. <sup>35</sup>The LORD made a covenant with them and commanded them, "You shall not fear other gods or bow yourselves to them or serve them or sacrifice to them; <sup>36</sup>but you shall fear the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt with great power and with an outstretched arm; you shall bow yourselves to him, and to him you shall sacrifice. <sup>37</sup>And the statutes and the ordinances and the law and the commandment which he wrote for you, you shall always be careful to do. You shall not fear other gods, <sup>38</sup>and you shall not forget the covenant that I have made with you. You shall not fear other gods, <sup>39</sup>but you shall fear the LORD your God, and he will deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies." <sup>40</sup>However they would not listen, but they did according to their former manner.

<sup>41</sup>So these nations feared the LORD and also served their graven images; their children likewise, and their children's children—as their fathers did, so they do to this day.

- a. Shalmanezar V, 727–722 B.C.E.
- b. Sargon II captured Samaria in 721 and exiled 27,290 inhabitants.
- c. Or “made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire.”
- d. Syriac Latin; Heb. “them.”
- e. From this point on the term “Samaritans” is used.

According to this Judahite version of the story, the Samaritans were descendants of the forced Gentile settlers whose conversion to the faith of Israel was under duress. They were the heirs of the idolatrous and faithless kingdom of Israel, and their own religious practice was syncretistic and faithless.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Samaritan and Judean Relations***

The event that is related in the next passage places the foundation of the Gerizim temple in the latter part of the fourth century B.C.E., at a time when a close relationship had existed between the priesthoods on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem and on Mt. Gerizim in Shechem. It also reveals conflicts within the Jerusalemite community.

#### **Josephus, *Antiquities* 11:306–12**

306 Now the elders of Jerusalem, resenting the fact that the brother of the high priest Jaddus was sharing the high priesthood while married to a foreigner,<sup>a</sup> rose up against him,<sup>307</sup> for they considered this marriage to be a stepping-stone for those who might wish to transgress the laws about taking wives and that this would be the beginning of intercourse with foreigners.<sup>b</sup> <sup>308</sup>They believed, moreover, that their former captivity and misfortunes had been caused by some who had erred in marrying and taking wives who were not of their own country. They therefore told Manasses either to divorce his wife or not to approach the altar. <sup>309</sup>And, as the high priest shared the indignation of the people and kept his brother from the altar, Manasses went to his father-in-law Sanaballetes<sup>c</sup> and said that while he loved his daughter Nikaso, nevertheless the priestly office was the highest in the nation and had always belonged to his family, and that therefore he did not wish to be deprived of it on her account. <sup>310</sup>But Sanaballetes promised not only to preserve the priesthood for him but also to procure for him the power and office of high priest and to appoint him governor of all the places over which he ruled, if he were willing to live with his daughter; and he said that he would build a temple similar to that in Jerusalem on Mount Garizein—this is the highest of the mountains near Samaria—and undertook to do these things with the consent of King Darius. <sup>311</sup>Elated by these promises, Manasses stayed with Sanaballetes, believing that he would obtain the high priesthood as the gift of Darius, for Sanaballetes, as it happened, was now an old man. <sup>312</sup>But, as many priests and Israelites were involved in such marriages, great was the confusion which seized the people of Jerusalem. For all these deserted to Manasses, and Sanaballetes supplied them with money and with land for cultivation and assigned them places wherein to dwell, in every way seeking to win favor for his son-in-law.

a. That is, the daughter of Sanaballetes, the Samaritan governor. This may be a memory of the event referred to in Neh 13:28, which involves a close relative (the son-in-law) of the high priest, who was married to the daughter of Sanballat (Grk. *Sanballatēs*).

b. The Judahites considered the Samaritans to be foreigners, at least as far as marriage was concerned.

c. A dynastic name of the governors of Samaria, as is now clear from the Wadi Daliyeh papyri; see Frank M. Cross, Jr., "A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration," *JBL* 94 (1975), 4–18; reprinted in idem, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 151–72; Daniel R. Schwartz, "On Some Papyri and Josephus' Sources and Chronology for the Persian Period," *JSJ* 21 (1990), 175–99.

## THE HASIDEANS (ḤASIDIM)

1 and 2 Maccabees describe how a "company of Hasideans (Gk: *synagōgē Asidaiōn*=Heb. *qēhal ḥasidim*), mighty warriors of Israel" joined the revolt that was being led by Mattathias, the father of Judas Maccabeus, and how "the Hasideans" abandoned the revolt after the priesthood of Alcimus was established. These texts led scholars to seek other evidence for the existence of a Hasidean group in Palestine during the Hellenistic period. However, since the Hebrew *ḥasid* ("pious") can be used in a generic sense without reference to a specific named group, we must be cautious in drawing specific conclusions about the group mentioned in 1 and 2 Maccabees and its relationship to individuals and groups designated by the same name that are mentioned elsewhere in the literature of the period. This said, several other texts that refer to an "assembly of the Ḥasidim" do give one pause.

### Psalm 149

Two psalms at the end of the canonical psalter mention "the pious," and in Psalm 149 we read:

Praise the LORD,  
sing to the LORD a new song,  
his praise in *the assembly of the pious* (*qēhal ḥasidim*). (v. 1)

Certain persons who construe themselves as "the pious" (and "Israel" and "children of Zion") hold communal gatherings for the purpose of singing God's praises, including, perhaps Psalms 146–149. Noteworthy for the sake of our comparison is the reference to the militant activity of these *Ḥasidim* in Ps 149:5–9, although it is uncertain whether this group was a direct ancestor of the militant "company of Hasideans" mentioned in 1 Macc 2:42, or whether the latter may have been inspired by the wording of the psalm.

### Apocryphal Psalms, col. 18

A well-preserved scroll of the Book of Psalms from Qumran Cave 11 (11QPs<sup>a</sup>) contains a number of compositions that are not found in the canonical Psalter.



Although these apocryphal psalms were not the creation of the Qumran sectaries (some of them we know from other, non-sectarian sources), the contents of some of them resemble the Qumran sectarian compositions and may have derived from circles antecedent to the Qumran community.<sup>3</sup> One of these compositions, written perhaps in the late third or early second century B.C.E., is a call to praise God and divine Wisdom (on which see below, pp. 208–9) in which the author describes the activity and self-understanding of his community.

- 1 [With a loud voice glorify God;  
in the congregation of the many proclaim his majesty.  
<sup>2</sup>In the multitude of the upright glorify his name  
and with the faithful recount his greatness.]  
<sup>3</sup>[Bind] your souls with the good ones  
and with the pure ones to glorify the Most High.  
<sup>4</sup>Form an assembly to proclaim his salvation,  
and be not lax in making known his might  
and his majesty to all simple folk. . . .  
<sup>12</sup>From the gates of the righteous is heard her (i.e., Wisdom's) voice  
and from *the assembly of the pious* (*qēhal ḥasidim*) her song.  
<sup>13</sup>When they eat with satiety she is cited,  
also when they drink in community together,  
<sup>14</sup>Their meditation is on the law of the Most High,  
their words on making known his might.  
<sup>15</sup>How far from the wicked is her word,  
from all haughty men to know her.

The “assembly of pious ones” from which this psalm emanated claimed to have divinely given insight that informed their piety, and they distinguished themselves from all others. Nonetheless, they had the responsibility to instruct the people whom they considered to be “simple” and “lacking in judgment.” As a community, they gathered to sing God’s praises and meditate on the Torah; and, if we take v. 13 literally, to share communal meals.

The expression “assembly of pious ones” is identical to its counterpart in Ps 149:1, and is the equivalent of the Greek expression in 1 Macc 2:42. Like Ps 149:1–6, this is a hymn of praise to God. In fact, the word “synagogue” means “assembly.” Nonetheless, it lacks any reference to the militant activities or tendencies expressed in the other two texts.

### The Psalms of Solomon

In this collection of psalms from the first century B.C.E., the Greek noun *hosioi* (= Heb. *Ḥasidim*) is a frequent designator of the group in which the psalms were composed, and twice we hear of the congregation(s) of the pious (*synagōgai hosion*, 17:16; *synedrion hosion*, 4:1). As the very existence of the psalms attests, these gatherings were the setting for communal worship. Of communal meals and of militant or pacifist ideologies we hear nothing.

### ***Passive Resistance***

The First Book of Maccabees relates how the revolt against the Seleucid Greeks broke out in 168 B.C.E. after the king, Antiochus Epiphanes, promulgated decrees forbidding the observance of the Torah and requiring Jews to participate in pagan religious rituals. At first, the faithful met the decrees with passive resistance. The text does not state that these “passive resisters” were Hasideans, but this is possible.

#### **1 Maccabees 1:62–64**

62 But many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food.<sup>a</sup> <sup>63</sup>They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die. <sup>64</sup>And very great wrath came upon Israel.

a. The Seleucids, as part of their policy of repression of Judaism, attempted to force Jews to eat forbidden foods.

### ***Revolt***

A priest named Mattathias from the country town of Modein raised the banner of revolt, killing a king’s officer who was enforcing the decrees. He and his sons then fled to the hills (1 Macc 2:1–28).

### ***Further Passive Resistance***

Other Jews fled to the wilderness to escape the enforcement of the decrees and were slaughtered by the king’s soldiers. This is related in the following passage.

#### **1 Maccabees 2:29–38**

29 Then many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness to dwell there, <sup>30</sup>they, their sons, their wives, and their cattle, because evils pressed heavily upon them. <sup>31</sup>And it was reported to the king’s officers, and to the troops in Jerusalem the city of David, that men who had rejected the king’s command had gone down to the hiding places in the wilderness. <sup>32</sup>Many pursued them and overtook them; they encamped opposite them and prepared for battle against them on the Sabbath day. <sup>33</sup>And they said to them, “Enough of this! Come out and do what the king commands, and you will live.” <sup>34</sup>But they said, “We will not come out, nor will we do what the king commands and so profane the Sabbath day.”<sup>a</sup> <sup>35</sup>Then the enemy hastened to attack them. <sup>36</sup>But they did not answer them or hurl a stone at them or block up their hiding places, <sup>37</sup>for they said, “Let us all die in our innocence; heaven and earth testify for us that you are killing us unjustly.” <sup>38</sup>So they attacked them on the Sabbath, and they died, with their wives and children and cattle, to the number of a thousand persons.<sup>b</sup>

a. Contrast the attitude of Mattathias and his sons, who decide to fight on the Sabbath (vv. 39–41), conceivably in reaction to these events.

b. Cf. T Mos 8–10, and below, pp. 130–32.

The context makes it clear that the people described in this text are not the same as Mattathias and his sons. The atmosphere of rigorous observance of the Torah and devotion to its injunctions, particularly the Sabbath, and to God as its author is typical of pious circles of the time. Whether the persons here described were pacifists in principle is unclear. The issue is that they will not fight on the Sabbath, the divinely ordained day of rest. If these did not belong to “the company of the Hasideans,” they were groups of the same type.

### ***The Hasideans Join the Armed Resistance***

Explicit references to the Hasideans do, however, occur in the Books of Maccabees. The first of these describes Mattathias’s decision to fight on the Sabbath if that becomes necessary. At this point he and his allies are joined by “the company of the Hasideans.”

#### **1 Maccabees 2:42–44**

42 Then there united with them<sup>a</sup> a company of Hasideans,<sup>b</sup> mighty warriors of Israel, everyone who offered himself willingly for the law.<sup>c</sup> 43 And all who became fugitives to escape their troubles joined them and reinforced them. 44 They organized an army and struck down sinners in their anger and lawless men in their wrath; the survivors fled to the Gentiles for safety.

a. Mattathias and his sons.

b. I.e., “community of the pious”; cf. Ps 149:1 and 11QPs<sup>a</sup> 18:12, quoted above (p. 17).

c. Compare the term in 1QS 1:7.

The “company of the Hasideans” are an army of “mighty warriors.” Their first action is against the Hellenizing apostates. Somewhat later, when Alcimus was intriguing to get the high priesthood, he reported to the Seleucid authorities, according to 2 Macc 14:6, that “those of the Jews who are called Hasideans, whose leader is Judas Maccabeus, are keeping up war and stirring up sedition and will not let the kingdom attain tranquillity.” Whatever be the accuracy of the report, it clearly shows both the association of the Hasideans with the revolt and their repute for military prowess. If we identify “many who were seeking righteousness” as the Hasideans, then their “pacifism” was not such, but an outcome of their unwillingness to fight on the Sabbath day. However, this identification is not certain and there may have been two (or more) pietistic groups with different attitudes to passive resistance.

### ***The Hasideans Abandon the Revolt***

In 161 B.C.E., Alcimus succeeded in getting himself appointed high priest. At that time he was approached by a group of Jews, apparently the Hasideans, who sued for terms and with whom he dealt most treacherously, killing sixty of them. This is the last text dealing explicitly with the Hasideans.

## 1 Maccabees 7:12–18

12 Then a group of scribes<sup>a</sup> appeared in a body before Alcimus and Bacchides<sup>b</sup> to ask for just terms. <sup>13</sup>The Hasideans were the first among the sons of Israel to seek peace from them, <sup>14</sup>for they said, “A priest of the line of Aaron has come with the army and he will not harm us.” <sup>15</sup>And he spoke peaceable words to them and swore this oath to them: “We will not seek to injure you or your friends.” <sup>16</sup>So they trusted him, but he seized sixty of them and killed them in one day, in accordance with the word which was written, <sup>17</sup>“The flesh of your saints and their blood they poured out round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them.”<sup>c</sup> <sup>18</sup>The fear and dread of them fell upon all the people, for they said, “There is no truth or justice in them, for they have violated the agreement and the oath that they swore.”

a. The Hasideans are here represented as part of a “group of scribes” (1 Macc 7:12). The term “scribe” is a difficult one; it starts as a designation of the wise court official in the old wisdom tradition. Perhaps a special application of this term was responsible for Ezra’s title as “scribe of the Torah of Moses” (Ezra 7:6); later ben Sira refers to himself as a scribe (Sir 38:24); Enoch is the prototypical scribe of heavenly wisdom (Jub 4:17–20); the New Testament on a number of occasions refers to “the scribes and the Pharisees” (note esp. Matt 23 par.) or “the scribes of the Pharisees” (Mark 2:16; cf. Luke 5:30). In the present text, perhaps, the reference is not to a specific group but to a particular learned class that could have included the Hasideans.

b. Seleucid general.

c. Ps 79:2–3. The word translated “saints” here is *ḥasideka* which could be rendered as “your Hasideans.”

The reason the Hasideans gave for their misplaced trust in Alcimus was that “a priest of the line of Aaron has come.” The proper character of the priesthood was a particularly important element in their religious worldview and apparently, with the accession of Alcimus, they considered the true line of the priesthood to have been restored.

One further piece of information may help illustrate this little-known group. First, a number of rabbinic sources (edited in the second to fifth centuries C.E.) refer to “the former Hasidim” or “the Hasidim and the men of action.” These groups were characterized by a particularly rigorous approach to the spirit and practice of the *halakha* (Jewish religious law). Their views on Sabbath observance, for example, were stricter than those of others, and they emphasized devoutness in prayer, charity, and the redemption of slaves as prime religious obligations.

The evidence we have presented attests the existence in the Hellenistic period, or perhaps earlier, of certain Jews who described themselves as “the pious.” The term implies a comparison to other Jews whom they did not consider to be “pious,” or who did not belong to their group. But as 11QPs<sup>a</sup> 18 indicates, this comparison did not necessarily suggest that others not of their persuasion were gross “sinners.” The expression “assembly/ies of the pious” indicates a sense of community that realized itself as they met for worship and study of the Torah and,

perhaps for communal meals. The plural “assemblies” (Ps Sol 17:16) suggests a plurality of such groups rather than a formally constituted religious sect.<sup>4</sup>

During the revolt led by Mattathias and then his son, Judas Maccabeus, members of one such group who had honed their skills as warriors (under what circumstances we have no idea) made common cause with the rebels, but later discharged themselves because they thought that their concern about the legitimacy of the high priesthood had been met. That members of other pietistic groups resisted the king’s decrees is likely, but the sources never refer to them as Hasideans or *Hasidim*.

Some scholars have attributed to the Hasideans a number of apocalyptic writings that stem from the time of the Maccabean revolt. These texts, which deal with the problems arising from the persecution of the righteous, include the Book of Daniel and the “Dream Visions” of Enoch (1 Enoch 85–90). In other compositions from the same period we may also perceive the footprints of pious persons and perhaps the communities to which they belonged. Nonetheless, although these texts are, on the whole, not dissonant with what we can perceive about the Hasideans from the sources that refer directly to them, there is no indication that they were the creation of a single community called “the Hasideans.” As we have seen, there was probably a proliferation of religious groups whose very names—if they had such designations—have perished.<sup>5</sup>

So, for all the interest that inheres in the study of the oldest discernible such group designated by name in the books of the Maccabees, the paucity of the assured information provides little insight into their character, and nothing at all is known of their size, influence, or organization.<sup>6</sup> Nor do we have any writing assuredly written by them.

## PHARISEES, SADDUCEES, AND ESSENES

The most important reports on the Jewish parties are those of the historian Flavius Josephus. Himself of priestly descent and an avowed Pharisee, Josephus wrote two histories: *The Jewish War*, composed soon after the conclusion of the great revolt against the Romans in the year 70 C.E., and the *Jewish Antiquities*, published in Rome a quarter of a century later. Both histories preserve passages characterizing the chief Jewish groups of the age. Although they were written at a great remove in time from the origins of the groups they discuss, Josephus’s reports are still the best historical information at our disposal. They were written for inclusion in historical works of quite distinct purposes. Josephus wished to show that the Jews were not alone responsible for the great revolt but that great blame also devolved on the corrupt and venal procuratorial government. Moreover, he maintained that the Pharisees, who emerged after the revolt as the predominant group, were in fact dominant in the preceding period. In addition, Josephus was writing for a cultured, pagan audience; so he tended to reformulate the views and doctrines of the groups he discussed in the conceptual

terminology of the Greeks. These factors must be taken into account when assessing Josephus's reports.

Josephus distinguishes four religious and social groups (he calls them "philosophies") among the Jews: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Zealots (we leave this last group apart for the moment, for it does not seem to have roots going back as far as the others). His reports on the Pharisees and the Sadducees are quite brief. Those on the third group, the Essenes, are much more extensive. Both the Pharisees and Sadducees were religious groups functioning within the broader community, while the Essenes were a separatist sect. As such, they were probably less known to Josephus's readers and excited even more interest, especially in a Greek world that was greatly fascinated by reports about ascetic Oriental saints and communities.<sup>7</sup> The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were the library of an Essene community, supplements Josephus's descriptions of the Essenes.

Both the Pharisees and the Essenes have been regarded as offshoots of the Hasideans.<sup>8</sup> Our lack of evidence for a single group called "Hasideans" or *ḥasidim* makes this hypothesis implausible as formulated. Nonetheless, it is not unlikely that both of these groups or trends arose variously from a kind of pietistic Judaism whose multiform existence is attested by the texts cited above. The possibility of such historical continuities might be tested through a comparison of the historical snippets about the Hasideans with the texts from Qumran, as well as Josephus's reports concerning the Pharisees and the Essenes. In reading the texts below, it is important to remember that, for the most part, the reports on the Pharisees and Sadducees are retrospective. Moreover, we have virtually no surviving writings that are definitely identifiable as Pharisee or Sadducee. So, we cannot counterbalance the reports about these groups with writings generated by them.

### ***The Pharisees***

Texts from Josephus's *Jewish War* and *Antiquities* are an ancient source of information about a few aspects of Pharisaic teaching and practice.

#### **Josephus, *Antiquities* 18:12–15**

##### THE DOCTRINES AND ROLE OF THE PHARISEES

12 The Pharisees simplify their standard of living, making no concession to luxury.<sup>a</sup> They follow the guidance of that which their doctrine has selected and transmitted as good, attaching the chief importance to the observance of those commandments which it has seen fit to dictate to them.<sup>b</sup> They show respect and deference to their elders, nor do they rashly presume to contradict their proposals.

<sup>13</sup>Though they postulate that everything is brought about by fate, still they do not deprive the human will of the pursuit of what is in man's power, since it was

God's pleasure that there should be a fusion and that the will of man with his virtue and vice should be admitted to the council-chamber of fate.<sup>c</sup> <sup>14</sup>They believe that souls have power to survive death and that there are rewards and punishments under the earth for those who have led lives of virtue or vice: eternal imprisonment is the lot of evil souls, while the good souls receive an easy passage to a new life.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Because of these views they are, as a matter of fact, extremely influential among the townsfolk; and all prayers and sacred rites of divine worship are performed according to their exposition.<sup>e</sup> This is the great tribute that the inhabitants of the cities, by practicing the highest ideals both in their way of living and in their discourse, have paid to the excellence of the Pharisees.

a. Some have seen in this an indication that the Pharisees came from the more modest and popular classes.

b. Josephus alludes to the respect that the Pharisees showed to the traditions of their teachers. This is related to their chief characteristic, i.e., their tradition and modes of exegesis.

c. Compare the rabbinic saying "All is foreseen, yet freedom of choice is given" (*m. Avot* 3:19). The paradox implicit here is basic to the Pharisaic and later rabbinic view on free will and divine omniscience. Compare briefly *War* 2:162 below and *Ant.* 13:172, "As for the Pharisees, they say that certain things are the work of Fate, but not all; as to other events, it depends upon ourselves whether they shall take place or not." An earlier formulation of this problem is *Sir* 33:7–15.

d. Here Josephus appears to formulate the idea of resurrection in terms readily comprehensible to his Greek readers, viz., the transmigration or reincarnation of souls.

e. The popular role of the Pharisees is emphasized. The people, particularly those of the towns, follow their expositions. Does this imply that they were more innovative, while country and village dwellers were more conservative?

### Josephus, *Jewish War* 2:162–63

#### THE PHARISEES' VIEW OF FATE

162 Of the two first-named schools, the Pharisees, who are considered the most accurate interpreters of the laws,<sup>a</sup> and hold the position of the leading sect, attribute everything to Fate and to God;<sup>163</sup> they hold that to act rightly or otherwise rests, indeed, for the most part with men, but that in each action Fate cooperates. Every soul, they maintain, is imperishable, but the soul of the good alone passes into another body,<sup>b</sup> while the souls of the wicked suffer eternal punishment.

a. This emphasizes the particular characteristic of the Pharisees as interpreters of the laws.

b. This attributes to the Pharisees a belief in the reincarnation of the righteous; see also *War* 3:374. This appears to be Hellenizing formulation. See the previous passage.

Elsewhere Josephus, relating events of the time of John Hyrcanus I (135–105 B.C.E.), has occasion to set the views of the Pharisees and the Sadducees in contrast with one another.

## Josephus, *Antiquities* 13:297–98

### THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES

297 For the present I wish merely to explain that the Pharisees had passed on to the people certain regulations handed down by former generations and not recorded in the laws of Moses,<sup>a</sup> for which reason they are rejected by the Sadducean group, who hold that only those regulations should be considered valid which were written down (in Scripture), and that those which had been handed down by former generations need not be observed.<sup>298</sup> And concerning these matters the two parties came to have controversies and serious differences, the Sadducees having the confidence of the wealthy alone but no following among the populace, while the Pharisees have the support of the masses.<sup>b</sup>

a. Note Josephus's clear statement that the Pharisaic tradition of exegesis was originally independent of the written "laws of Moses." Again this feature of the Pharisees is to the fore, and the authority of their traditional exegesis is one of the points at which they are contrasted with the Sadducees.

b. This is one of the clearest statements of the differing social contexts of these two groups and of the overwhelming predominance of the Pharisees, which Josephus emphasizes repeatedly; cf. *Ant.* 13:288: "And so great is their influence with the masses that even when they speak against a king or high priest, they immediately gain credence." Here there is no mention of an urban context for Pharisaism.

According to these texts the Pharisees based an exacting interpretation of the Mosaic Torah on traditions handed down apart from the biblical text itself. Resurrection of the body or punishment of human souls awaited those who, respectively, obeyed or disobeyed the Torah. Such rewards and punishments were functions of a belief that one was responsible for one's actions, even though some sort of determinism or "fate" also played a role in human conduct. By the end of the second temple period, if not somewhat earlier, the majority of the people followed their views.

The general picture Josephus gives of the Pharisees is borne out by the attitudes toward them expressed by groups or individuals who were not in agreement with them. Although the commentary on the Book of Nahum from Qumran Cave 4 (4QpNah) is rather fragmentary, its preserved sections provide some insight into how the Essenes viewed the Pharisees, and, to a lesser degree, the Sadducees.

## Nahum Commentary on 2:12 (col. 1:4–8)

### JANNAI CRUCIFIES THE PHARISEES

". . . And filled his caves with prey, and his abodes (dens) with torn flesh." [This refers to] the Young Lion<sup>a</sup> who [wrought venge]ance on them "that sought smooth things," in that he proceeded to hang them up alive.<sup>b</sup> [Such a thing had never] before [been done] in Israel, for the Scripture designates a man hung up alive as ["a reproach unto God"].



- a. Alexander Jannai, a Hasmonean (Maccabean) king (103–76 B.C.E.).  
 b. Compare *Ant.* 13:380. The “seekers after smooth things,” or “smooth exegetes,” are the Pharisees. The Essenes clearly do not approve of them.

### Nahum Commentary on 3:1–4 (col. 2:1–10)

#### THE RULE AND FALSE TEACHING OF THE PHARISEES

2 <sup>1</sup>“Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of fraud and rapine.” This alludes to the city of Ephraim<sup>a</sup>—to those “seekers after smooth things” who, in the latter days, will walk in fraud and lies.

“The prey departs not, nor do the crack of the whip, the whirl of wheels, the prancing horses, the bounding chariots, the charging horsemen, the flashing [sword], the glittering spear, the multitude of slain, the great heap of carcasses. No end is there to the bodies; men stumble over those bodies.” This alludes to the period when the “seekers after smooth things” hold sway. <sup>5</sup>Never will the sword of the Gentiles depart from the midst of their community, nor yet captivity, spoliation, and internecine strife, nor exile through fear of an enemy. Many a guilty corpse shall fall in their days, and there shall indeed be no end to the slain. Moreover, through the guilty counsel (policy) of these men, men will indeed stumble in the body of their own flesh.

“Because of the manifold whoredoms of the well-favored whore, that mistress of witchery, who sells whole nations through her whoredom, and whole families through her wit[cher]y.” This alludes to those of Ephraim who will go astray,<sup>b</sup> those by whose false teaching, lying tongue, and guileful lips many shall indeed be led astray—kings, princes, priests, laymen, and affiliated strangers<sup>c</sup>—and through whose counsel (policy) their cities and families shall go to ruin, and through whose tongues nobles and rulers will fall.

a. Our rendering follows David Flusser’s interpretation: “city of Ephraim” is Jerusalem; “Ephraim” is the Pharisees; “Manasseh,” below, is the Sadducees. This is typological exegesis in the Qumran style.

b. Gaster: “those who will go leading Ephraim astray.”

c. This is external corroboration of Josephus’s observation that most of the people followed the Pharisees.

Especially striking in these lines are the criticisms of the Pharisees as false and lying teachers who lead many astray. The expression “seekers after smooth things” (*dôrshê haḥalaqôt*; cf. Isa 30:10) plays on the Pharisees’ role as interpreters (lit. “seekers”) of the Torah’s prescriptions (*ḥalaqôt*), depicting them as slippery or facile interpreters. This fits other information about the Pharisees’ attempts to ease prescriptions of the Torah that they felt were not feasible or practicable under present circumstances.

### Nahum Commentary on 3:6–7 (col. 3:1–8)

#### THE PEOPLE WILL ABANDON THE PHARISEES

3 <sup>1</sup>“And I will cast abominable filth upon you and make you vile and render you loathsome. And it shall come to pass that all who see you shall flee from you.”

This alludes to the “seekers after smooth things” whose evil works will, at the end of the present epoch, become manifest to all Israel. Many will then discern these people’s iniquity and come to hate them and to hold them loathsome on account of their guilty arrogance. Moreover, when (eventually) the glory of Judah suffers dishonor, <sup>5</sup>those in Ephraim who have hitherto been duped will flee from the midst of those men’s congregation and, renouncing them that led them astray, attach themselves (once more) to (the true) Israel.<sup>a</sup>

“And they will say, Nineveh is ravaged, (but) who bemoans her? Whence can I seek any who will condole with you?” This alludes to the “seekers after smooth things” whose counsel (policy) will come to naught and whose synagogue will be dispersed. No longer will they lead the congregation astray, and those who were previously duped will no longer hold to their counsel.

a. The author expects that at the end of days the false teaching of the Pharisees will be uncovered and that many will turn from their congregation to the true Israel, i.e., the sect of the Essenes.

### Nahum Commentary on 3:8 (col. 3:8–9)

#### THE SADDUCEES

3<sup>8</sup>Are you better than (Nô) Amon, that was situated by the rivers?” The allusion in the term “Amon” is to Manasseh. The “rivers” are the grandees of Manasseh, the nobles of . . . who . . . the . . .

“Water was all around her; her rampart was the sea; water also formed her walls.” The allusion is to the men of her army, her warriors. . . .<sup>a</sup>

a. Notice the terms “grandees,” “nobles,” “men of army”—all fitting for the aristocratic background of some of the Sadducees.

### Nahum Commentary on 3:9b–11 (col. 3:12–4:8)

#### FURTHER HISTORY OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

3<sup>12</sup>“Put and Lubim are among her supporters.” 4<sup>1</sup>This alludes to the wicked men of . . . that divisive group who ally themselves with Manasseh.

“She too is gone into exile, into captivity; her babes are dashed in pieces at the top of every street; over her nobles men cast lots, and her grandees are bound in chains.” This alludes to Manasseh in the final era, when its kingdom will be brought low at [the hand of]. . . . Its womenfolk, babes, and infants will go into captivity; while its warriors and its honored men [will fall] by the sword.

“[You too shall become drunken], <sup>5</sup>become all beclouded.” This alludes to the wicked men of Ephraim whose cup (of doom) will follow that of Manasseh, and who will become. . . .

The scroll breaks off at this point.

### The New Testament

Josephus’s descriptions of the Pharisees are supplemented by the reports of the Pharisees’ beliefs and especially their practices scattered through the four

Gospels and Acts. To judge from these contemporary accounts and from later rabbinic tradition, Pharisaic observance of the Torah emphasized the proper sanctifying of the Sabbath, full tithing, and the application of the priestly laws of ritual purity to the preparation and consumption of the ordinary food that they ate each day, apart from the temple. These latter two concerns—that one eat only properly tithed food in a state of priestly purity—were reflected in the exclusiveness of their communal table fellowship.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to stories about the practices of the Pharisees, the Gospels contain polemical sayings ascribed to Jesus that accuse the Pharisees of hypocrisy and self-righteousness. Especially notorious is the attack on the “scribes and Pharisees” in Matthew 23. This text is paralleled by a passage in the rabbinic writing, *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan*, A 37, that criticizes seven types of hypocritical Pharisees. Although this rabbinic criticism suggests some basis in reality, it should not be used to support an overall negative picture of the Pharisees. Self-righteousness and hypocrisy are common in many forms of religion, perhaps particularly in those that focus on the importance of human actions. New Testament portrayals of the Pharisees are distorted by the heat of Jewish-Christian polemics, which have made a proper understanding of the role of law in Judaism so rare (see chapter 3, below).<sup>10</sup>

We know nothing for certain about the origins of the Pharisees. In Josephus’s account, they appear on the scene first during the reign of John Hyrcanus I (134–104; *Ant.* 10:288–98). That they may have been an offshoot of some hasidic group is quite possible. Their detailed study of the Torah, communal meals, and concern with the common people provide some parallels to the psalm of the *Hasidim* in 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, but as we have seen (above, pp. 16–21), the sociology of assemblies of the *Hasidim* in the early second century B.C.E. is obscure and was very likely rather complex.

### ***The Sadducees***

Josephus provides a few details about the beliefs and character of the Sadducees.

#### **Josephus, *Antiquities* 18:16–17**

16 The Sadducees hold that the soul perishes along with the body. They own no observance of any sort apart from the laws:<sup>a</sup> in fact, they reckon it a virtue to dispute with the teachers of the path of wisdom that they pursue.<sup>b</sup> <sup>17</sup>There are but few men to whom this doctrine has been made known, but these are men of the highest standing.<sup>c</sup> They accomplish practically nothing, however. For whenever they assume some office, though they submit unwillingly and perforce, yet submit they do to the formulas of the Pharisees, since otherwise the masses would not tolerate them.

a. This reflects the Sadducean attitude to the oral law of the Pharisees. See also Josephus’s comments at *Ant.* 13:297, quoted above. They seem to hold that there is no afterlife.

b. Surely the Sadducees did not just follow the literal word of Scripture with no exegesis. The difference with the Pharisees must have related to the extent of the development of the exegetical tradition and to the measure of authority attributed to it. It is questionable whether this Sadducean argumentativeness is what lies behind Josephus's comment in *War* 2:166 that they are "even among themselves, rather boorish in their behavior, and in their intercourse with their peers as rude as to aliens" (contrast the comment in LCL).

c. This states that the Sadducees had a doctrine revealed only to a few men of very high standing. While this seems to imply that they had a secret teaching, perhaps just their limited numbers are here reflected. The following sentences support this latter interpretation.

### **Josephus, *Jewish War* 2:164–66**

164 The Sadducees, the second of the orders, do away with Fate altogether, and remove God beyond, not merely the commission but the very sight of evil. <sup>165</sup>They maintain that man has the free choice of good or evil and that it rests with each man's will whether he follows the one or the other.<sup>a</sup> As for the persistence of the soul after death, penalties in the underworld, and rewards, they will have none of them.

<sup>166</sup>The Pharisees are affectionate to each other and cultivate harmonious relations with the community. The Sadducees, on the contrary, are, even among themselves, rather boorish in their behavior, and in their intercourse with their peers are as rude as to aliens. Such is what I have to say on the Jewish philosophical schools.

a. As in the passage on the Pharisees (162), this raises the question of Providence: The Sadducees have a radical attitude to free will, claiming that one's choice is completely free and denying postmortem sanctions.

### **Acts 23:6–10**

That the resurrection of the dead and the existence of angels were central points of difference between the Pharisees and the Sadducees is clear from two texts in the New Testament. Matthew 22:23 par. mentions that the Sadducees deny the resurrection of the dead and relates an incident in which the Sadducees attempt to prove this from Scripture. In Acts 23:6–10 Paul, standing before the tribunal of the Sanhedrin, uses the disagreement of the two groups in these matters as part of his forensic approach. These texts corroborate the observations made by Josephus.

#### ANGELS AND RESURRECTION

6 But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead I am on trial." <sup>7</sup>And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. <sup>8</sup>For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection,

nor angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. <sup>9</sup>Then a great clamor arose; and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' party stood up and contended, "We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?" <sup>10</sup>And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them and bring him into the barracks.

According to scholarly consensus, the Sadducees were conservative priestly aristocrats of the ruling class who denied the validity of Pharisaic oral law as well as the Pharisaic belief in the resurrection and related matters. These assertions are largely supported by the texts cited above, although we must assume that the Sadducees' reading of the Torah must have been informed by some form of interpretation, as is the case with all law codes (see above, p. 28, n. b on *Ant.* 18:16–17). Concerning the social status of the Sadducees we know little for certain. The name suggests some connection with the Zadokite priesthood, but there is no sure evidence that all priestly aristocrats were Sadducees or that all Sadducees were priestly aristocrats.<sup>11</sup>

### *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan, A 5*

This text presents a clearly apocryphal story of the formation of two sects, the Sadducees and the Boethusians. They disagreed over a saying of Antigonus of Soko, who stands in the chain of tradition in *m. Avot* 1:3 between Simeon the Righteous and the first of the "pairs" and so, theoretically at least, lived in the second century B.C.E. His dictum touches on the motives for moral action, and in this context the question of the future life arises. Here, apparently, the term "Pharisees" implies a measure of asceticism. Of the Boethusians little is known. The sect is perhaps to be connected with Simon ben Boethus, who was appointed high priest by Herod in 24 B.C.E.

#### THE FORMATION OF TWO SECTS

Antigonus of Soko took over from Simeon the Righteous. He used to say: "Be not like slaves [or: servants] that serve their master for the sake of compensation; be rather like slaves [or: servants] who serve their master with no thought of compensation. And let the fear of heaven be upon you, so that your reward may be doubled in the age to come."

Antigonus of Soko had two disciples who used to study his words. They taught them to their disciples, and their disciples to their disciples. These proceeded to examine the words closely and demanded: "Why did our ancestors see fit to say this thing? Is it possible that a laborer should do his work all day and not take his reward in the evening? If our ancestors, forsooth, had known that there is another world and that there will be a resurrection of the dead, they would not have spoken in this manner."

So they arose and withdrew from the Torah and split into two sects, the Sadducees and the Boethusians: Sadducees named after Zadok, Boethusians after Boethus. And they used silver vessels and gold vessels all their lives—not because

they were ostentatious; but the Sadducees said, "It is a tradition amongst the Pharisees to afflict themselves in this world; yet in the world to come they will have nothing."

### ***The Essenes***

Our knowledge of a group named Essenes derives, principally, from the extensive accounts of Josephus (quoted below) and Philo of Alexandria (*Every Man Is Free* 75–91). With the discovery of a mass of scrolls in eleven caves near the ruins of Qumran, on the northwestern coast of the Dead Sea, the scholarly world was introduced to a large corpus of manuscripts inscribed between the third century B.C.E. and the first century C.E. Among them is a group of texts authored by members of a religious group, or some closely related groups, who considered themselves to be true Israel to the exclusion of rest of the Jews. We call these scrolls "sectarian scrolls." Although scholars debate the *precise* identity of this group or groups, close parallels between Josephus's accounts of Essene belief and practice and the beliefs and practices attested in a number of the sectarian texts have led to a wide consensus that the authors of these texts, and the community located at Qumran, were members of an Essene group or, in some instances, of a closely related group. Differences between Philo and Josephus, on the one hand, and the scrolls, on the other hand, indicate, however, that we should not make an automatic one-to-one equation between Josephus's and Philo's named Essenes, the community at Qumran, and the authors of the Qumran sectarian scrolls.<sup>12</sup>

#### THE ESSENES ACCORDING TO JOSEPHUS

#### **Josephus, *Antiquities* 18:18–22**

#### THE DOCTRINES AND LIFE OF THE ESSENES

18 The doctrine of the Essenes is wont to leave everything in the hands of God.<sup>a</sup> They regard the soul as immortal and believe that they ought to strive especially to draw near to righteousness.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>19</sup>They send votive offerings to the temple but perform their sacrifices employing a different ritual of purification.<sup>c</sup> For this reason they are barred from those precincts of the temple that are frequented by all the people and perform their rites by themselves. Otherwise they are of the highest character, devoting themselves solely to agricultural labor. . . .

<sup>20</sup>Moreover, they hold their possessions in common,<sup>d</sup> and the wealthy man receives no more enjoyment from his property than the man who possesses nothing. The men who practice this way of life number more than four thousand. <sup>21</sup>They neither bring wives into the community, nor do they own slaves, since they believe that the latter practice contributes to injustice and that the former opens the way to a source of dissension. Instead they live by themselves and perform menial tasks for one another. <sup>22</sup>They elect by show of hands good men to receive their revenues and the produce of earth and priests to prepare bread and other food.<sup>e</sup>

- a. This states the Essene attitude to divine Providence. The Qumran texts bear out their belief in determinism.
- b. No writing of sectarian or Essene origin among the Qumran scrolls expresses belief in the resurrection of the body.
- c. This expresses the particular attitudes of the Essenes to the temple and their strict views of ritual purity.
- d. The Rule of the Community and the Damascus Document spell out the principles of communal life and its regulation in much greater detail.
- e. This sentence focuses on the special role of the priests, particularly with respect to the bread of the communal meal; compare also the Rule of Blessings (1QSb).

### **Josephus, *Jewish War* 2:119–61**

This passage opens with a general account of the sanctity of the Essenes, their celibacy, community of goods, feeling of brotherhood, and simplicity of deportment (paras. 119–27).

#### THE ESSENE DAILY ORDER OF LIFE

128 Their piety toward the Deity takes a peculiar form. Before the sun is up they utter no word on mundane matters, but offer in his direction<sup>a</sup> certain prayers, which have been handed down from their forefathers, as though entreating him to rise.<sup>129</sup> They are then dismissed by their superiors to the various crafts in which they are severally proficient and are strenuously employed until the fifth hour, when they again assemble in one place and, after girding their loins with linen cloths, bathe their bodies in cold water. After this purification, they assemble in a private apartment which none of the uninitiated is permitted to enter; pure now themselves, they repair to the refectory, as to some sacred shrine.<sup>b</sup> <sup>130</sup>When they have taken their seats in silence, the baker serves out the loaves to them in order, and the cook sets before each one plate with a single course. <sup>131</sup>Before meat the priest says a grace, and none may partake until after the prayer. When breakfast is ended, he pronounces a further grace; thus at the beginning and at the close they do homage to God as the bountiful giver of life. Then laying aside their raiment, as holy vestments, they again betake themselves to their labors until the evening. <sup>132</sup>On their return they sup in like manner, and any guests who may have arrived sit down with them. No clamor or disturbance ever pollutes their dwelling; they speak in turn, each making way for his neighbor. <sup>133</sup>To persons outside, the silence of those within appears like some awful mystery; it is in fact due to their invariable sobriety and to the limitation of their allotted portions of meat and drink to the demands of nature.

The following sections (134–36) stress the Essenes' charity and mutual self-help, moderation of character, and avoidance of oaths. Josephus continues: "They display an extraordinary interest in the writings of the ancients, singling out in particular those which make for the welfare of soul and body; with the help of these, and with a view to the treatment of diseases, they make investigations into medicinal roots and the properties of stones." Next Josephus describes their rules of admission to the sect in a fashion not dissimilar to 1QS 8:14–23 (paras.

137–42). Particular note is taken of their oaths to preserve secretly “the books of the sect and the names of the angels” (142). Then follows a description of their legal practice and various other aspects of their way of life (143–49); the four grades of members as well as their fortitude under Roman persecution conclude this section (150–53).

#### THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

154 For it is a fixed belief of theirs that the body is corruptible and its constituent matter impermanent, but that the soul is immortal and imperishable. Emanating from the finest ether, these souls become entangled, as it were, in the prisonhouse of the body, to which they are dragged down by a sort of natural spell;<sup>c</sup> 155 but when once they are released from the bonds of the flesh, then, as though liberated from a long servitude, they rejoice and are borne aloft. Sharing the belief of the sons of Greece, they maintain that for virtuous souls there is reserved an abode beyond the ocean, a place which is not oppressed by rain or snow or heat but is refreshed by the ever gentle breath of the west wind coming in from the ocean, while they relegate base souls to a murky and tempestuous dungeon, big with never-ending punishments.<sup>d</sup>

#### ESSENE FORTUNETELLERS

159 There are some among them who profess to foretell the future, being versed from their early years in holy books, various forms of purification, and apothegms of prophets; and seldom, if ever, do they err in their predictions.<sup>e</sup>

#### OTHER ESSENE GROUPS

160 There is yet another order of Essenes, which, while at one with the rest in its mode of life, customs, and regulations, differs from them in its views on marriage. They think that those who decline to marry cut off the chief function of life, the propagation of the race, and, what is more, that were all to adopt the same view the whole race would very quickly die out.<sup>f</sup> 161 They give their wives, however, a three years' probation, and only marry them after they have by three periods of purification given proof of fecundity. They have no intercourse with them during pregnancy, thus showing that their motive in marrying is not self-indulgence but the procreation of children. In the bath the women wear a dress, the men a loin-cloth. Such are the usages of this order.

a. We follow the interpretation of John Strugnell, “Flavius Josephus.” Contrast LCL: “to him.”

b. The Rule of the Congregation (1QSa) also describes the Essene meal, perhaps in ideal terms; see below, p. 168.

c. This passage formulates Essene determinism in terms of the Greek body/soul contrast. On the Essene attitudes in these matters, see the illuminating paper of David Flusser, “The Dead Sea Sect and Pre-Pauline Christianity,” *ScrHier* 4 (1958): 215–66.

d. Here Josephus most probably reinterprets Essene views of the fate of the soul after death in terms of Greek eschatology.



e. Josephus mentions such predictions; see *War* 1:78; 2:113; *Ant.* 15:373ff. Cf. also *Ant.* 13:311.

f. It is clear that there were differing groups of Essenes. Those described in the main section live in villages and towns (124); a similar situation is implied by the Damascus Document. The Rule of the Community, however, prescribes for a group living at a single communal center.

#### ESSENE TEXTS FROM QUMRAN

From the sectarian texts found at Qumran, we can sketch a profile of the community or communities that created them. They considered themselves to be exclusively the chosen, the true Israel, constituted by special revelation about the right interpretation of the Torah and the nature of the times, living in a high level of purity as they awaited the imminent consummation of the present evil age. The two major texts that present rules for life are the Community Rule and the Damascus Document. Both documents grew and changed over the years, and they occur at Qumran in a number of copies and versions. The ways of life the two texts prescribe are similar in many respects, but they differ too much to be describing exactly the same group.

#### THE HISTORY OF THE SECT

### Damascus Document 1:1–13

Leaves of two medieval manuscripts of this Hebrew text first came to light early in the twentieth century with the discovery of the storage room (*genizah*) of a Cairo synagogue. A half century later, three Qumran caves yielded substantial fragments of ten manuscripts that overlapped the Cairo manuscripts and added substantial blocks of new text both to the introductory exhortation and, especially, to the extensive law code that constituted its second and larger section. Our extract is drawn from the first part of one of the Cairo manuscripts. It is especially significant for its account of the sect's beginning in what were considered to be the latter days and its reference to "the righteous teacher" (or "the one who teaches righteousness"), who appears elsewhere in the sectarian scrolls as the recipient of revelation about the eschatological secrets of the prophets and the right interpretation of the Torah.

#### THE EXHORTATION

1 <sup>1</sup>Hear now, all you who know righteousness, and consider the works of God, for he has a dispute with all flesh and will condemn all those who despise him.

#### THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

For when they were unfaithful and forsook him, he hid his face from Israel and his sanctuary and delivered them up to the sword. But remembering the covenant of the forefathers, he left a remnant to <sup>5</sup>Israel and did not deliver it up to be

destroyed. And in the age of wrath, three hundred and ninety years after he had given them into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon,<sup>a</sup> he visited them, and he caused a root of planting<sup>b</sup> to spring from Israel and Aaron to inherit his land and to prosper on the good things of his earth. And they perceived their iniquity and recognized that they were guilty men, yet <sup>10</sup>for twenty years they were like blind men groping for the way.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

And God observed their deeds, that they sought him with a whole heart, and he raised for them a Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of his heart.<sup>d</sup> And he made known to the latter generations that which God had done to the latter generation, the congregation of traitors, to those who departed from the way.

a. According to this view, the Restoration never took place, and consequently the temple was never rebuilt. This might have been written by a group that did not participate in the Return or, alternatively, one that denied that the Return was important in the sacred history because it considered the rebuilt temple to be invalid. If taken seriously, the dates bring us down to the earlier part of the second century B.C.E.

b. A term found repeatedly in sectarian documents. Drawing on Isa 60:21, it is most systematically developed in the fine poem in the Thanksgiving Hymns (1QH 16:4–37). It refers to the sect in this age.

c. Some regard the group that repented to be the Hasideans. The twenty years then are the time between the outbreak of the Maccabean revolt and the foundation of the Essene sect.

d. The priestly founder of the sect; the continuation of the passage refers, apparently, to the specific revelations made by the Righteous Teacher. Some have suggested that the latter was the author of some of the Thanksgiving Hymns (best preserved in 1QH), others that he instituted the sect's particular form of eschatological exegesis of prophetic texts called the *peshar*. An example of a *peshar* is the Nahum Commentary (see above, pp. 24–26). Neither of these views is certain.

#### THE ESSENE TEACHING OF THE TWO SPIRITS

### The Rule of the Community 3:13–4:23

Eleven copies of the Rule of the Community were found in three Qumran caves. These various copies differ from each other in significant ways and reflect developments in the religious ideas and practice of the group. Probably written in the early first century B.C.E., the Rule contains instruction and regulations for a sectarian community life. When the first and—as it turned out—the fullest and only intact copy of the text was published, detailed parallels between its communal regulations and Josephus's and Philo's descriptions of the Essenes led quickly to the conclusion that the group living at Qumran was an Essene community. Here we reproduce from the Cave 1 manuscript the major part of a lengthy theological exposition of the views of the sect. Its dualistic world view, which features the respective tutelage of the angelic Prince of Light and the demonic Angel of

Darkness, undergirds and authenticates the group's understanding of itself as the true Israel. This exposition is notable as being the first—and perhaps the only—systematic attempt before the Middle Ages to set forth a Jewish theological stance. Many scholars now maintain that the “Teaching on the Two Spirits” is a separate text embedded in the Rule of the Community. Indeed, one of the manuscripts from Cave 4 does not contain it.

#### INTRODUCTION

3 <sup>13</sup>The Master<sup>a</sup> shall instruct all the sons of light and shall teach them the nature of all the children of men according to the kind of spirit which they possess, the signs identifying their works during their lifetime, their visitation for chastisement, <sup>15</sup>and the time of their reward.

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

From the God of Knowledge comes all that is and shall be. Before ever they existed he established their whole design, and when, as ordained for them, they come into being, it is in accord with his glorious design that they accomplish their task without change.<sup>b</sup> The laws of all things are in his hand, and he provides them with all their needs.

He has created man to govern the world<sup>c</sup> and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of his visitation: the spirits of truth and falsehood. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness.<sup>20</sup> All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness.<sup>d</sup>

The Angel of Darkness leads all the children of righteousness astray, and until his end, all their sin, iniquities, wickedness, and all their unlawful deeds are caused by his dominion in accordance with the mysteries of God. Every one of their chastisements, and every one of the seasons of their distress, shall be brought about by the rule of his persecution; for all his allotted spirits seek the overthrow of the sons of light.<sup>e</sup>

But the God of Israel and his Angel of Truth will succor all <sup>25</sup>the sons of light, for it is he who created the spirits of light and darkness and founded every action upon them and established every deed [upon] their [ways]. And he loves the one <sup>4</sup> <sup>1</sup>everlastingly and delights in its works forever; but the counsel of the other he loathes and forever hates its ways.<sup>f</sup>

#### THE WAYS OF THE TWO SPIRITS

These are their ways: (the way of the spirit of truth)<sup>g</sup> in the world for the enlightenment of the heart of man, and that all the paths of true righteousness may be made straight before him, and that fear of the laws of God may be instilled in his heart: a spirit of humility, patience, abundant charity, unending goodness, understanding, and intelligence; (a spirit of) mighty wisdom which trusts in all the deeds of God and leans on his great lovingkindness; a spirit of discernment in every purpose,

of zeal for just laws, of holy <sup>5</sup>intent with steadfastness of heart, of great charity toward all the sons of truth, of admirable purity which detests all unclean idols, of humble conduct sprung from an understanding of all things, and of faithful concealment of the mysteries of God. These are the counsels of the spirit to the sons of truth in this world.

And as for the visitation of all who walk in this spirit, it shall be healing, great peace in a long life, and fruitfulness, together with every everlasting blessing and eternal joy in life without end, a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in unending light.

But the ways of the spirit of falsehood are these: greed, and slackness in the search for righteousness, wickedness and lies, haughtiness and pride, falseness and deceit, cruelty <sup>10</sup>and abundant evil, ill-temper and much folly and brazen insolence, abominable deeds (committed) in a spirit of lust, and ways of lewdness in the service of uncleanness, a blaspheming tongue, blindness of eye and dullness of ear, stiffness of neck and heaviness of heart, so that man walks in all the ways of darkness and guile.

And the visitation of all who walk in this spirit shall be a multitude of plagues by the hand of all the destroying angels, everlasting damnation by the avenging wrath of the fury of God, eternal torment, and endless disgrace together with shameful extinction in the fire of the dark regions. The times of all their generations shall be spent in sorrowful mourning and in bitter misery and in calamities of darkness until they are destroyed without remnant or survivor.

#### THE COURSE OF HISTORY

<sup>15</sup>The nature of all the children of men is ruled by these (two spirits), and during their life all the hosts of men have a portion in their divisions and walk in (both) their ways. And the whole reward for their deeds shall be, for everlasting ages, according to whether each man's portion in their two divisions is great or small. For God has established the spirits in equal measure until the final age and has set everlasting hatred between their divisions. Truth abhors the works of falsehood, and falsehood hates all the ways of truth. And their struggle is fierce in all their arguments, for they do not walk together.

But in the mysteries of his understanding, and in his glorious wisdom, God has ordained an end for falsehood, and at the time of the visitation he will destroy it forever. Then truth, which has wallowed in the ways of wickedness during the dominion of falsehood until <sup>20</sup>the appointed time of judgment, shall arise in the world forever. God will then purify every deed of man with his truth; he will refine for himself the human frame by rooting out all spirit of falsehood from the bounds of his flesh. He will cleanse him of all wicked deeds with the spirit of holiness; like purifying waters he will shed upon him the spirit of truth (to cleanse him) of all abomination and falsehood. And he shall be plunged into the spirit of purification that he may instruct the upright in the knowledge of the Most High and teach the wisdom of the sons of heaven to the perfect of way. For God has chosen them for an everlasting covenant, and all the glory of Adam shall be theirs. There shall be no more lies, and all the works of falsehood shall be put to shame.<sup>h</sup>

a. A member of the community responsible for teaching its laws and doctrines.

b. God created everything; all is predetermined according to his will.

- c. A common idea going back to Gen 1:28.
- d. From the time of their creation, men are divided into two groups over each of which God has appointed an angelic spirit.
- e. This paragraph explains why the sons of light commit sins.
- f. This states the involvement of God, not just of the Prince of Light, on behalf of the righteous. This hints at a certain lack of symmetry in the dualism of the sect.
- g. Some such phrase must have been lost. This section sets forth the characteristics of the sons of light and darkness and the visitations upon them.
- h. The course of history including the period of the rule of the spirit of falsehood, is foreordained. The language of purification of the flesh and immersion in the spirit of purification is noteworthy. The final aim is the teaching of the true and perfect way.

The Essene community settled at Qumran around 100 B.C.E. The site was overrun by the Roman army in 68 C.E. during the first revolt, and the scrolls were left behind. We know nothing of the fate of the Qumranite Essenes, who may have escaped this destruction.

The origins of the group are also obscure. The opening column of the Cairo Damascus Document may indicate that the group was an offshoot of some Hasidean community. This hypothesis may be supported by the psalm of the *Ḥasidim* in the Cave 11 psalm scroll (see above, pp. 16–17) and by its references to meditation on the Torah and, perhaps, communal meals.<sup>13</sup> Strikingly different from the psalm (col. 18), however, is the sectarian scrolls' antagonism toward outsiders, and especially teachers of a different persuasion, who are labelled, liars, false seers, and facile interpreters of the Torah.<sup>14</sup> Thus, if both the Pharisees and the Essenes were the heirs of a Hasidean tradition embodied in "assemblies of the pious," we must posit different branches of *Ḥasidim* or, perhaps better, a developing exclusivist tendency among the Essenes and, especially, those who went to live in Qumran. The discovery of many texts among the Scrolls that indicate various degrees of exclusivism, turning on different issues of theology and practice, may point in this direction.

## THE ZEALOTS

Josephus refers to this group as the "Fourth Philosophy" after the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes; he calls them "bandits." The Zealots may have originated with Judah the Gaulanite about 6 C.E., as some maintain, but subsequently nothing is heard of them until 66 C.E. At that time Judah's sons, Jacob, Simon, and Menahem, were active in the revolt. Another of the irredentist leaders, Eleazar ben Yair, was also of this family. They seem to have been characterized by their activist political and military policy in opposing Roman rule. In other respects they may not have differed greatly from the Pharisees (see Josephus, *Ant.* 18:23). Josephus is violently opposed to the Zealots, "for so these miscreants called themselves, as though they were zealous in the cause of virtue and not for vice in its basest and most extravagant form" (*War* 4:161; see also 7:268–70).

### ***Judah the Gaulanite***

The context of the passage is the registration of Jewish properties by the Romans after Archelaus was deposed (6/7 C.E.).

#### **Josephus, *Antiquities* 18:4–6, 9–10**

4 But a certain Judas,<sup>a</sup> a Gaulanite<sup>b</sup> from a city named Gamala, who had enlisted the aid of Saddok, a Pharisee, threw himself into the cause of rebellion. They said that the assessment carried with it a status amounting to downright slavery, no less, and appealed to the nation to make a bid for independence. <sup>5</sup>They urged that in case of success the Jews would have laid the foundation of prosperity, while if they failed to obtain any such boon they would win honor and renown for their lofty aim; and that Heaven would be their zealous helper to no lesser end than the furthering of their enterprise until it succeeded—all the more if with high devotion in their hearts they stood firm and did not shrink from the bloodshed that might be necessary. <sup>6</sup>Since the populace, when they heard their appeals, responded gladly, the plot to strike boldly made serious progress; and so these men sowed the seed of every kind of misery, which so afflicted the nation that words are inadequate. . . .

<sup>9</sup>Here is a lesson that an innovation and reform in ancestral traditions weighs heavily in the scale in leading to the destruction of the congregation of the people. In this case certainly, Judas and Saddok started among us an intrusive fourth school of philosophy;<sup>c</sup> and when they had won an abundance of devotees, they filled the body politic immediately with tumult, also planting the seeds of those troubles which subsequently overtook it, all because of the novelty of this hitherto unknown philosophy that I shall now describe. <sup>10</sup>My reason for giving this brief account of it is chiefly that the zeal which Judas and Saddok inspired in the younger element meant the ruin of our cause.

a. The founder of the “Fourth Philosophy”: *War* 2:118; *Ant.* 18:23; cf. Acts 5:37. *War* 2:118 states of him: “This man was a sophist who founded a sect of his own, having nothing in common with the others.”

b. Alternatively “Galilean”; cf. *War* 2:118.

c. So Josephus attacks this group, which he does at every possible juncture. He calls each of the groups or sects he describes “philosophies,” using a Hellenizing terminology.

#### **Josephus, *Jewish War* 7:418–19**

##### THE COURAGE OF THE ZEALOTS

418 For under every form of torture and laceration of body, devised for the sole object of making them acknowledge Caesar as lord, not one submitted nor was brought to the verge of utterance;<sup>a</sup> but all kept their resolve, triumphant over constraint, meeting the tortures and the fire with bodies that seemed insensible of pain and souls that well-nigh exulted in it. <sup>419</sup>But most of all were the spectators struck by the children of tender age, not one of whom could be prevailed upon to

call Caesar lord.<sup>b</sup> So far did the strength of courage rise superior to the weakness of their frames.

a. This, in fact, together with an activist policy, seems to be the chief characteristic of the Zealots; the latter are the subject of the statement here. See the next passage.

b. For a detailed fictionalized account describing a similar incident, see 2 Macc 7, below, pp. 137–41.

### Josephus, *Antiquities* 18:23–24

#### THE FOURTH PHILOSOPHY

23 As for the fourth of the philosophies, Judas the Galilean set himself up as leader of it. This school agrees in all other respects with the opinions of the Pharisees, except that they have a passion for liberty that is almost unconquerable, since they are convinced that God alone is their leader and master.<sup>a</sup> They think little of submitting to death in unusual forms and permitting vengeance to fall on kinsmen and friends if only they may avoid calling any man master.<sup>24</sup> Inasmuch as most people have seen the steadfastness of their resolution amid such circumstances, I may forgo any further account, for I have no fear that anything reported of them will be considered incredible. The danger is, rather, that report may minimize the indifference with which they accept the grinding misery of pain.

a. Feldman (LCL) points out that Josephus nowhere makes the direct identification between the “Fourth Philosophy” and the Zealots. For more recent views, see David Rhoads, “Zealots,” *ABD* 6:1043–54.

### Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 9:6

#### ZEALOT RETRIBUTION

He who steals the libation vessel; he who invokes curses by means of a magician; he who has intercourse with a pagan woman—the Zealots smite him.

This rabbinic text may also refer to the same Zealots. The practices mentioned here as incurring the wrath of the Zealots are affronts of basic religious sensibilities of the Jews.

### THE THERAPEUTAE

In his treatise *On the Contemplative Life*, Philo describes a Jewish sect that settled on the shores of the Mareotic Lake in Egypt. His report is the only information we have about this group, which has been regarded as an important indication of pre-Christian monastic tendencies in Egypt. Some have suggested that there are connections between the Therapeutae and the Essenes. The two passages from Philo’s extensive account that are given here provide a general indication of the character of this group and illustrate one of their peculiar practices—ecstatic choral song and dance.

## *The Daily Life of the Therapeutae*

### *Philo, On the Contemplative Life 24–33*

#### THEIR DWELLINGS

24 The houses of the society thus collected are exceedingly simple, providing protection against two of the most pressing dangers, the fiery heat of the sun and the icy cold of the air. They are neither near together as in towns, since living at close quarters is troublesome and displeasing to people who are seeking to satisfy their desire for solitude, nor yet at a great distance, because of the sense of fellowship which they cherish, and to render help to each other if robbers attack them. <sup>25</sup>In each house there is a consecrated room which is called a sanctuary or closet, and closeted in this they are initiated into the mysteries of the sanctified life. They take nothing into it, either drink or food or any other of the things necessary for the needs of the body, but laws and oracles delivered through the mouth of prophets, and psalms, and anything else which fosters and perfects knowledge and piety. <sup>26</sup>They keep the memory of God alive and never forget it, so that even in their dreams the picture is nothing else but the loveliness of divine excellences and powers. Indeed, many when asleep and dreaming give utterance to the glorious verities of their holy philosophy.

#### THEIR DAILY ROUTINE

<sup>27</sup>Twice every day they pray, at dawn and at eventide; at sunrise they pray for a fine bright day, fine and bright in the true sense of the heavenly daylight which they pray may fill their minds. At sunset they ask that the soul may be wholly relieved from the press of the senses and the objects of sense and sitting where she is consistory and council chamber to herself pursue the quest of truth. <sup>28</sup>The interval between early morning and evening is spent entirely in spiritual exercise. They read the Holy Scriptures and seek wisdom from their ancestral philosophy by taking it as an allegory, since they think that the words of the literal text are symbols of something whose hidden nature is revealed by studying the underlying meaning.

#### THEIR WRITINGS

<sup>29</sup>They have also writings of men of old, the founders of their way of thinking, who left many memorials of the form used in allegorical interpretation, and these they take as a kind of archetype and imitate the method in which this principle is carried out. And so they do not confine themselves to contemplation but also compose hymns and psalms to God in all sorts of meters and melodies which they write down with the rhythms necessarily made more solemn.

#### THEIR SABBATH OBSERVANCE AND CEREMONY

<sup>30</sup>For six days they seek wisdom by themselves in solitude in the closets mentioned above, never passing the outside door of the house or even getting a distant view



of it. But every seventh day they meet together as for a general assembly and sit in order according to their age in the proper attitude, with their hands inside the robe, the right hand between the breast and the chin, and the left withdrawn along the flank.<sup>31</sup> Then the senior among them who also has the fullest knowledge of the doctrines which they profess comes forward and with visage and voice alike quiet and composed gives a well-reasoned and wise discourse. He does not make an exhibition of clever rhetoric like the orators or sophists of today, but follows careful examination by careful expression of the exact meaning of the thoughts, and this does not lodge just outside the ears of the audience but passes through the hearing into the soul and there stays securely. All the others sit still and listen, showing their approval merely by their looks or nods.

#### THE SABBATH SANCTUARY

<sup>32</sup>This common sanctuary in which they meet every seventh day is a double enclosure, one portion set apart for the use of the men, the other for the women, for women, too, regularly make part of the audience with the same ardor and the same sense of their calling.<sup>33</sup> The wall between the two chambers rises up from the ground to three or four cubits built in the form of a breastwork, while the space above up to the roof is left open. This arrangement serves two purposes; the modesty becoming to the female sex is preserved, while the women sitting within earshot can easily follow what is said, since there is nothing to obstruct the voice of the speaker.

### *The Dance and the Chorus*

#### *Philo, On the Contemplative Life 83–85, 88–89*

In this section, in the course of describing the more festal symposia of the Therapeutae, Philo relates the following:

83 After the supper they hold the sacred vigil which is conducted in the following way. They rise up all together and standing in the middle of the refectory form themselves first into two choirs, one of men and one of women, the leader and precentor chosen for each being the most honored among them and also the most musical.<sup>84</sup> Then they sing hymns to God composed of many measures and set to many melodies, sometimes chanting together, sometimes taking up the harmony antiphonally, hands and feet keeping time in accompaniment, and rapt with enthusiasm reproduce sometimes the lyrics of the procession, sometimes of the halt and of the wheeling and counter-wheeling of a choric dance.<sup>85</sup> Then when each choir has separately done its own part in the feast, having drunk as in the Bacchic rites of the strong wine of God's love, they mix and both together become a single choir, a copy of the choir set up of old beside the Red Sea in honor of the wonders there wrought. . . .

<sup>88</sup>It is on this model above all that the choir of the Therapeutae of either sex, note in response to note and voice to voice, the treble of the women blending with the bass of the men, create a harmonious concert, music in the truest sense. Lovely are the thoughts, lovely the words, and worthy of reverence the choristers, and the

end and aim of thoughts, words, and choristers alike is piety.<sup>89</sup> Thus they continue till dawn, drunk with this drunkenness in which there is no shame, then not with heavy heads or drowsy eyes but more alert and wakeful than when they came to the banquet, they stand with their faces and whole body turned to the east, and when they see the sun rising they stretch their hands up to heaven and pray for bright days and knowledge of the truth and the power of keen-sighted thinking. And after the prayers they depart each to his private sanctuary once more to ply the trade and till the field of their wonted philosophy.

## **HELLENISM AND APOCALYPTICISM: TWO TENDENCIES WITHIN JUDAISM**

The final three centuries B.C.E. saw the development of two tendencies in Judaism that cannot be identified exclusively with any known group. A brief treatment of these two tendencies helps to fill out our understanding of Jewish religion and culture in that period and also underscores the value of the information that we do possess about known groups.

### ***Hellenistic Judaism***

The Greek culture that Alexander's conquests brought to the Near East affected the religion and culture of the Jews in Palestine and the Diaspora in many and various ways. The Hebrew and Aramaic writings that were in the process of becoming Israel's authoritative scriptures were translated into Greek, as were other religious texts that were never recognized as authoritative by the rabbis. Other Jewish texts were composed in Greek, and some were even cast in Greek literary genres or otherwise invested with Greek literary conventions. Motifs from Greek mythology reshaped ancient Israelite narratives, and Platonic and Stoic philosophy provided new ways to describe the cosmos and transmit ethical teaching. Moreover, Hellenistic elements were not limited to texts in the Greek language, but can also be found in writings composed in Hebrew and Aramaic.<sup>15</sup>

The Hellenization of Judaism was a transformative and communicative process. Translation from Hebrew and Aramaic to Greek, composition in Greek, and the use of elements from Greek mythology, philosophy, and literary tradition created new perspectives and nuances that transformed and enriched aspects of Jewish religion. This, in turn, made Jewish religious thought and practice more compatible both to Jews otherwise steeped in Greek culture and to some Gentiles.

In the early decades of the second century B.C.E., some aspects of Hellenization threatened the very existence of Jewish religious and cultural identity and cost the lives of those who struggled to retain that identity (see above, p. 10). After this crisis had passed, persons like Philo of Alexandria and the authors of the *Wisdom of Solomon* and *Fourth Maccabees*, with remarkable effect, cast their interpretations of Jewish religion in the rhetoric and forms of Greek

philosophy. Around the same time, the Hellenization of Judaism facilitated the spread of messianic Judaism (i.e., early Christianity) into the Gentile world, and subsequently it would be Christian scribes who preserved and transmitted most of the surviving texts of Hellenistic Judaism.

The Hellenization of Judaism was a broad cultural phenomenon that can be perceived in a wide range of texts and material remains of the period. Very few, if any, sectors or groups within Judaism escaped its influence, and no heavily Hellenized Jewish text can be identified with a known Jewish group or sect.

#### 4 Maccabees 1:1–6, 15–18

Chapters 6 and 7 of 2 Maccabees recount the grisly tales of the Maccabean martyrs—a scribe named Eleazar and seven Jewish brothers and their mother—who die for the Torah rather than submit to the decrees of Antiochus Epiphanes that were intended to replace Jewish religion with Hellenistic pagan observances (see below, pp. 137–41). Ironically, the text employs a Greek literary form and Platonic and Stoic terminology and concepts to retell the stories (which were, in some respects, already Hellenized).

In this author's real world, his philosophical recasting of the older stories spoke relevantly to a Hellenized Jewish audience. In the fictive world of his narrative, the protagonists explain their religion and their rationale for suffering in terms that are appropriate to their Hellenistic interlocutor (and persecutor). Employing a standard doctrine of the Platonic and Stoic schools, the author sets forth his thesis: reason is sovereign over the emotions (1:1). Differentiating himself from the Greeks, however, he identifies the Mosaic Torah as the wisdom in which reason is grounded. To demonstrate his thesis, he narrates the story of the Maccabean martyrs, who endure excruciating pain and death rather than surrender their obedience to the Law. In addition to the philosophy that they expound, their recasting of bodily resurrection (2 Macc 7) as "immortality" and their citing of biblical characters as examples of abstract virtues (and vices) are additional examples of the author's Hellenization of his Jewish heritage.

1:1 The subject that I am about to discuss is most philosophical, that is, whether devout reason is sovereign over the emotions. So it is right for me to advise you to pay earnest attention to philosophy. <sup>2</sup>For the subject is essential to everyone who is seeking knowledge, and in addition it includes the praise of the highest virtue—I mean, of course, rational judgment. <sup>3</sup>If, then, it is evident that reason rules over those emotions that hinder self-control, namely, gluttony and lust, <sup>4</sup>it is also clear that it masters the emotions that hinder one from justice, such as malice, and those that stand in the way of courage, namely, anger, fear, and pain. <sup>5</sup>Some might perhaps ask, "If reason rules the emotions, why is it not sovereign over forgetfulness and ignorance?" Their attempt at argument is ridiculous. <sup>6</sup>For reason does not rule its own emotions, but those that are opposed to justice, courage, and self-control; and it is not for the purpose of destroying them, but so that one may not give way to them. . . . <sup>15</sup>Now reason is the mind that with sound logic prefers the life of wisdom. <sup>16</sup>Wisdom, next, is the knowledge of divine and human matters

and the causes of these.<sup>17</sup>This, in turn, is education in the law, by which we learn divine matters reverently and human matters to our advantage.<sup>18</sup>Now the kinds of wisdom are rational judgment, justice, courage, and self-control.<sup>a</sup>

a. Here the author mentions in one breath the four cardinal virtues of Stoic and Platonic philosophy that have been mentioned separately in vv. 2–4.

## ***Apocalypticism***

Apocalypticism is a dimension of Jewish religion that is known to us from pseudonymous writings whose authors assert the authority of these writings by claiming that they transmit the revelation of hidden things granted to distinguished figures of the past. The revelations concern, variously, the structure and progression of history, the nature of the cosmos, and the interpretation of divine law, and they take the form of (symbolic) dreams and visions and their interpretation, journeys through the cosmos (usually within dreams), and interactions with angels and occasionally the deity.<sup>16</sup>

### **1 Enoch**

The so-called Book of Enoch (or 1 Enoch) is the largest and most complex collection of Jewish apocalyptic texts. Its component parts, which are ascribed to the patriarch mentioned in Gen 5:18–24, were composed, in an accreting corpus, between the late fourth century B.C.E. and, roughly, the turn of the era. Like many other apocalypses, these Enochic texts reflect political and religious turmoil and anticipate divine judgment that will vindicate the righteous, the chosen, and the pious and bring everlasting punishment on their enemies.

Speaking in the voice of their alleged author, the passages that we quote express the authors' claims that their message transmits to the righteous and chosen of the latter days the divine revelation that Enoch received in heavenly visions that were interpreted by angels.

#### **1 Enoch 1:1–3**

Enhancing the author's explicit claim to revelation, these opening lines of the corpus paraphrase the words of two biblical prophets (Moses and Balaam) and lead into a poetic oracle that imitates biblical models (see below, pp. 125–29), thus making an implicit claim to prophetic inspiration.

1:1 The words of the blessing with which Enoch blessed the righteous chosen<sup>a</sup> who will be present on the day of tribulation, to remove all the enemies; and the righteous will be saved.

<sup>2</sup> And he took up his discourse and said,<sup>b</sup>

Enoch, a righteous man whose eyes were opened by God,

who had the vision of the Holy One and of heaven, which he showed me.<sup>c</sup>

From the words of the watchers and holy ones I heard everything;

and as I heard everything from them, I also understood what I saw.<sup>d</sup>

Not for this generation do I expound,  
 but concerning one that is distant I speak.<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>And concerning the chosen I speak now,  
 And concerning them I take up my discourse.

a. See the beginning of the blessing of Moses in Deut 33:1, and cf. further 1 Enoch 1:4 with Deut 33:2. The recipients of Enoch's revelation are the righteous and chosen rather than Israel in general as in Deut 33.

b. Compare these seven lines with Balaam's oracle in Num 24:15–17.

c. For this vision see 1 Enoch 14–16; chaps. 17–32 recount his journeys further into the cosmos.

d. Throughout his journeys in chaps. 18–32, the angels, called holy watchers, interpret Enoch's visions.

e. These two lines recast the "not now," "not near" language of Num 24:17 to refer to the distinction between Enoch's primordial time and the author's end-time to which Enoch's revelation refers.

### 1 Enoch 93:1–2, 10; 91:11

The last major section of 1 Enoch (chaps. 92–105) purports to be Enoch's "Epistle," a set of exhortations that apply his visions to the righteous and chosen. Imitating chap. 1, the seer cites the source of his revelation, referring to his vision of heaven and its interpretation by the angels, including here his inspection of the heavenly tablets on which are inscribed the course of human history, which he summarized in 93:1–10 and 91:11–17 (the latter section having been displaced in the manuscripts).

93:1 After this Enoch took up his discourse, saying,

"Concerning the sons of righteousness,  
 and concerning the chosen of eternity,  
 and concerning the plant of truth,  
 these things I say to you  
 and I make known to you, my sons,  
 I myself, Enoch.

The vision of heaven was shown to me,<sup>a</sup>

and from the words of the watchers and holy ones I have learned everything,  
 and in the heavenly tablets I read everything and I understood.

a. For Enoch's inspection of the heavenly tablets that contain a record of all human deeds, see 81:1–2 and the verbs *read*, *see*, *understood*.

These lines preface the "Apocalypse of Weeks" (1 Enoch 93:3–10 + 91:11–17) in which Enoch describes the events of world history as they would take place during ten "weeks" of years. We pick up at the conclusion of the seventh "week," which describes the revelation given to the righteous chosen in the end-time.

93:10 And at its conclusion, the chosen will be chosen,

as witnesses of righteousness from the everlasting plant of righteousness,  
 to whom will be given sevenfold wisdom and knowledge.

91:11 And they will uproot the foundations of violence,<sup>a</sup>  
and the structure of deceit in it,  
to execute judgment. . . .

a. This tristich describes the role of the chosen righteous of the end-time. Having received revelation, they function as executors of divine judgment. The Epistle repeatedly cites “violence” and “deceit” (i.e., social oppression and false religious teaching) as the cardinal sins of the end-time. Here “deceit” stands in contrast to the revelation received by the chosen. Perhaps the references to foundations and structure allude to the temple and the social sins of its elite priesthood and the teaching that emanated from it. Although the Apocalypse of Weeks refers explicitly to the tabernacle, the building and destruction of the first temple and the building of the eschatological temple, its complete silence on the second temple suggests severe criticism of its operations.

### 1 Enoch 104:10–13

Enoch brackets his “Epistle” with a passage that identifies the wisdom revealed in the seventh week with the contents of the revelation that Enoch received in heaven and has now inscribed in his books.

104:10 And now I know this mystery,  
That sinners will alter and copy the words of truth,  
and pervert many and lie and invent great fabrications,<sup>a</sup>  
and write books in their own names.

<sup>11</sup>Would that they would write all my words in truth,<sup>b</sup>  
and neither remove nor alter these words,  
but write in truth all that I testify to them.

<sup>12</sup>And again I know a second mystery,  
that to the righteous and pious and wise<sup>c</sup>  
my books will be given for the joy of righteousness and much wisdom.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Indeed, to them the books will be given,  
and they will believe in them,  
and in them all the righteous will rejoice and be glad,  
to learn from them all the paths of truth.<sup>e</sup>

a. Once again, the issue is false teaching, which is also viewed as the alteration and perversion of the truth. The image reiterates 98:14–99:2, as well as the opening indictment in the corpus (2:1–5:4), for which text, see below, pp. 125–29.

b. In this and the following two verses, the author “drops the other shoe” and identifies the eschatological wisdom mentioned in 93:10 with the content of Enoch’s books.

c. Here the word pair “righteous” and “chosen” is replaced with “righteous,” “pious,” and “wise.” This last relates to the fact that they are the recipients of wisdom (cf. also 93:10). The “pious” are rarely mentioned in the Epistle (see 100:5; and in one other context: 102:4, 6; 103:3–4, 9), which makes a connection with the *Hasidim* unlikely.

d. To speak of wisdom as something that “is given” (see also the next line) is a cliché for the transmission/reception of revelation. See 93:10, as well as 5:8 (see below, p. 127) and also, interestingly, Luke 21:15.

e. An allusion to ethical teaching structured according to the two ways; see above, pp. 34–37, and below, 148, n. a.

First Enoch—if we speak of the collection as a single entity—is one of a number of Jewish apocalypses, written between the late fourth or early third century B.C.E. and the end of the first century C.E. These include, among others: Daniel, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, and the Apocalypse of Abraham. They are a literary type, which functions to assert authority by claiming access to special revelation—one that differs from various forms of prophetic religion, and thus they attest an important, developing strand in Jewish religious concepts. But we should not ascribe the use of the literary genre to a particular social group or groups. Given the long period of time over which the Enochic corpus evolved, we might suppose that it was transmitted in a social context that somehow identified itself with the ancient figure of Enoch. Yet, the variety of views expressed in the works attributed to Enoch, including, e.g., the Parables of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71) and the so-called Second or Slavonic Book of Enoch, belies the hypothesis of a single group of “Enochic Jews.” Thus, it stretches the data to use the term “Enochic Judaism” in a way that suggests that a single group transmitted all the Enoch literature and we know what it was like.<sup>17</sup> We can see that in remarkable ways the Enochic authors synthesized many strands of Israelite religious thought as well as motifs from pagan mythology, but we know precious little about the social realia of the Enochic authors and the “community” in which they functioned.<sup>18</sup>

### THE JEWS IN THE EYES OF THE PAGANS

Two short passages illustrate how educated pagans of that time looked at the Jews. Attitudes to the Jews ranged from highly positive to rabidly anti-Semitic.

#### **Hecataeus of Abdera, *History of Egypt* (in Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 40, 3)**

Hecataeus (ca. 300 B.C.E.) writes about the Jews as a people expelled from Egypt. He indicates no anti-Jewish feeling and apparently has used a Jewish source.<sup>19</sup>

1 When in ancient times a pestilence arose in Egypt, the common people ascribed their troubles to the working of a divine agency, for indeed with many strangers of all sorts dwelling in their midst and practicing different rites of religion and sacrifice, their own traditional observances in honor of the gods had fallen into disuse.

<sup>2</sup>Hence the natives of the land surmised that unless they removed the foreigners their troubles would never be resolved. At once, therefore, the aliens were driven from the country, and the most outstanding and active among them banded together and, as some say, were cast ashore in Greece and certain other regions; their leaders were notable men, chief among them being Danaus and Cadmus. But the greater number were driven into what is now called Judaea, which is not far distant from Egypt and was at that time utterly uninhabited.

<sup>3</sup>The colony was headed by a man called Moses, outstanding both for his wisdom and for his courage. On taking possession of the land he founded, besides other cities, one that is now the most renowned of all, called Jerusalem. In addition he established the temple that they hold in chief veneration, instituted their forms of worship and ritual, drew up their laws, and ordered their political institutions.<sup>19</sup>

He also divided them into twelve tribes, since this is regarded as the most perfect number and corresponds to the number of months that make up a year.

<sup>4</sup>But he had no images whatsoever of the gods made for them, being of the opinion that God is not in human form; rather the heaven that surrounds the earth is alone divine and rules the universe. The sacrifices that he established differ from those of other nations, as does their way of living, for as a result of their own expulsion from Egypt he introduced an unsocial and intolerant mode of life. He picked out the men of most refinement and with the greatest ability to head the entire nation and appointed them priests; and he ordained that they should occupy themselves with the temple and the honors and sacrifices offered to their God.

<sup>5</sup>These same men he appointed to be judges in all major disputes, and entrusted to them the guardianship of the laws and customs. For this reason the Jews never have a king, and authority over the people is regularly vested in whichever priest is regarded as superior to his colleagues in wisdom and virtue. They call this man the high priest and believe that he acts as a messenger to them of God's commandments.

<sup>6</sup>It is he, we are told, who in their assemblies and other gatherings announces what is ordained, and the Jews are so docile in such matters that straightway they fall to the ground and do reverence to the high priest when he expounds the commandments to them. And at the end of their laws there is even appended the statement "These are the words that Moses heard from God and declares unto the Jews." Their lawgiver was careful also to make provision for warfare and required the young men to cultivate manliness, steadfastness, and generally the endurance of every hardship.

<sup>7</sup>He led out military expeditions against the neighboring tribes, and after annexing much land apportioned it out, assigning equal allotments to private citizens and greater ones to the priests, in order that they, by virtue of receiving more ample revenues, might be undistracted and apply themselves continually to the worship of God. The common citizens were forbidden to sell their individual plots, lest there be some who for their own advantage should buy them up, and by oppressing the poorer classes bring on a scarcity of manpower.

He required those who dwelt in the land to rear their children, and since offspring could be cared for at little cost, the Jews were from the start a populous nation. As to marriage and the burial of the dead, he saw to it that their customs should differ widely from those of other men. But later, when they became subject to foreign rule, as a result of their mingling with men of other nations (both under Persian rule and under that of the Macedonians who overthrew the Persians), many of their traditional practices were disturbed. Such is the account of Hecataeus of Abdera in regard to the Jews.

**Apollonius Molon, *On the Jews***  
**(in Josephus, *Against Apion* 2:79–80, 89, 91–96)**

Apollonius Molon was a rhetor, originally from Caria, who lived in the first century B.C.E. According to Josephus he was a rabid anti-Semite; his views are typical of much Hellenistic and Roman anti-Jewish prejudice.

<sup>79</sup>I am no less amazed at the proceedings of the authors who supplied him with his materials, I mean Posidonius and Apollonius Molon. On the one hand, they



charge us with not worshiping the same gods as other people; on the other, they tell lies and invent absurd calumnies about our temple without showing any consciousness of impiety. Yet to high-minded men nothing is more disgraceful than a lie, of any description, but above all on the subject of a temple of worldwide fame and commanding sanctity.

<sup>80</sup>Within this sanctuary Apion has the effrontery to assert that the Jews kept an ass's head, worshiping that animal and deeming it worthy of the deepest reverence; the fact was disclosed, he maintains, on the occasion of the spoliation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, when the head, made of gold and worth a high price, was discovered. . . .

<sup>81</sup>He adds a second story, about Greeks, which is a malicious slander upon us from beginning to end. . . . <sup>91</sup>He asserts that Antiochus found in the temple a couch on which a man was reclining with a table before him laden with a banquet of fish of the sea, beasts of the earth, and birds of the air, at which the poor fellow was gazing in stupefaction.

<sup>92</sup>The king's entry was instantly hailed by him with adoration, as about to procure him profound relief; falling at the king's knees, he stretched out his right hand and implored him to set him free. The king reassured him and bade him tell who he was, why he was living there, what was the meaning of his abundant fare. Thereupon, with sighs and tears, the man, in a pitiful tone, told the tale of his distress.

<sup>93</sup>He said, Apion continues, that he was a Greek and that while traveling about the province for a livelihood he was suddenly kidnapped by men of a foreign race and conveyed to the temple; there he was shut up and seen by nobody, but was fattened on feasts of the most lavish description. <sup>94</sup>At first these unlooked-for attentions deceived him and caused him pleasure; suspicion followed, then consternation. Finally, on consulting the attendants who waited upon him, he heard of the unutterable law of the Jews, for the sake of which he was being fed. The practice was repeated annually at a fixed season. <sup>95</sup>They would kidnap a Greek foreigner, fatten him for a year, and then convey him to a wood, where they slew him, sacrificed his body with their customary ritual, partook of his flesh, and, while immolating the Greek, swore an oath of hostility to the Greeks. The remains of their victim were then thrown into a pit.

<sup>96</sup>The man (Apion continues) stated that he had now but a few days left to live and implored the king, out of respect for the gods of Greece, to defeat this Jewish plot upon his lifeblood and to deliver him from his miserable predicament.

## NOTES

1. See, especially, the monumental synthesis by Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*; and Elias J. Bickerman, *Studies*.

2. On the historical issues relating to the Samaritans and the Judahite returnees, see Sara Japhet, "People and Land in the Restoration Period," in Georg Strecker, ed., *Das Land Israel in biblischer Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 103–25; reprinted in Japhet, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judaea* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 96–116.

3. Translation below by J. A. Sanders, DJD 4:65. Bracketed words in vv. 1–3 have been reconstructed from a later Syriac version of the psalm. For a comparison and contrast of

the psalm with the Qumran sectarian compositions, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 167–68.

4. See *ibid.*, 247, 399, nn. 21–22; and *idem*, *Ancient Judaism*, 176–78.

5. On the difficulty of ascribing the Book of Daniel to the Hasideans, see John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 67–69. On the proliferation of groups in this period, see Albert I. Baumgarten, *Jewish Sects*. On the difficulty of ascribing particular books to individual groups, not least the Hasideans, see Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism*, 176–81.

6. See Philip R. Davies, “Hasidim”; George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Social Aspects”; John Kampen, *Hasideans*; John J. Collins, *Daniel*, 67–69; Daniel Schwartz, “Hasidim.”

7. For this reason too, Philo of Alexandria (ca. 25 B.C.E.–50 C.E.) showed great interest in the Essenes and in another similar Jewish sect, the Therapeutae, who lived in Egypt (see above, pp. 39–42).

8. See Otto Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (Richmond: John Knox, 1968), 51; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:175–218.

9. See the summary discussion in Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism*, 162–63, 234, nn. 106–9, which draws on the extensive treatments of the subject by Jacob Neusner, *Piety and Politics*, and Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees*.

10. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism*, 29–51.

11. See the summary in *ibid.*, which is documented by the detailed discussions of Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees*, and Gary G. Porton, “Sadducees.”

12. On the identification of the sectarian scrolls from Qumran as Essene, see Todd S. Beall, *Josephus’ Description*; *idem*, “Essenes,” 265–68; Jodi Magness, *The Archeology of Qumran*; and the summary in Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism*, 167–74. For a much more skeptical approach, see Baumgarten (*Jewish Sects*), who rightly emphasizes the complex sociology of Jewish groups and sects during the Hellenistic period. An important, complicating factor is the similarity between some of the laws found in the Scrolls and laws that rabbinic tradition ascribes to the Sadducees, as opposed to the Pharisees. On this see the literature cited in Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism*, 238, nn. 145–46.

13. For meditation on the Torah, see 1QS 6:6–7. On communal meals among the Essenes and in the Scrolls, see Josephus, *War*, 2:129–33. In the Scrolls, see 1QSa 2:19–22 (below, p. 168).

14. On this exclusivism, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Religious Exclusivism: A World View Governing Some Texts Found at Qumran,” in Michael Becker and Wolfgang Fenske, eds., *Das Ende der Tage und die Gegenwart des Heils* (AGJU 44; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 45–67; reprinted in Jacob Neusner and Alan Avery-Peck, eds., *George W. E. Nickelsburg in Perspective: An Ongoing Dialogue of Learning* (2 vols.; JSJSup 80; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1:139–65.

15. For some more details and examples, see Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism*, 149–52.

16. *Idem*, “Apocalyptic Judaism.”

17. For the existence of “Enochic Judaism” as a distinctive form of Judaism, see Gabriele Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 163–209. While the idea has gained some currency, it is far from widely accepted.

18. George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 1–36, 81–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 64.

19. Other fragments of his writings on the Jews have survived in Josephus, *Against Apion* 1:183ff. See further Menaham Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 1:20–25.

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